

## Medicare Rx Update: May 11, 2006

### The May 15th enrollment deadline nears...

People with Medicare are urged to enroll in the drug benefit before the deadline rush. Medicare and its partners will be holding more than 1,000 enrollment events all over the country this week, to help people with Medicare enroll in a prescription drug plan before the May 15th deadline. In addition to the availability of thousands more volunteers at State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) and many other advocacy and support organizations for seniors and people with a disability, Medicare will have 6,000 customer service representatives and enhanced online support will be available.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is making available maximum customer service capacity through midnight, May 15th. Our Web site ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)) has also been enhanced to improve enrollment support. New features have been added to help users make a plan selection before May 15th, and server capacity for the Web site has more than quadrupled to better accommodate an increased number of users. Local SHIPs are increasing their staffing levels, and many will stay open until midnight on May 15th to help people enroll. Thousands of volunteers affiliated with other support organizations are also assisting in enrollment between now and May 15th. For more information, click the HHS press release: <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2006pres/20060508.html>

### ...as HHS Announces 37 Million Are Receiving Prescription Drug Coverage

Yesterday, HHS announced that almost 37 million people with Medicare now have prescription drug coverage. This number includes over 9 million individual enrollees in "stand alone" prescription drug plans and more than 1 million new enrollees in Medicare Advantage plans. In addition, 5.8 million people with Medicare are getting drug coverage through the Veterans Administration and other sources of coverage that are at least as good as Medicare -- bringing the total to approximately 36.9 million Medicare beneficiaries who are now receiving prescription drug coverage. Overall prescription drug coverage figures as of May 7th are:

- **Stand-Alone Prescription Drug Plans (PDPs):** 8.9 million people with Medicare have enrolled in stand-alone prescription drug plans, including 2.1 million enrollees receiving the low income subsidy.
- **Medicare Advantage with Prescription Drugs (MA-PDs):** 5.9 million beneficiaries receive coverage through Medicare Advantage plans with drug coverage (MA-PDs).
- **Medicare/Medicaid:** About 5.9 million Medicare-Medicaid beneficiaries were automatically enrolled in prescription drug plans.
- **Retiree Coverage:** About 6.9 million retirees are enrolled in the Medicare retiree subsidy. In addition, about 1.4 million retirees are in employer and union-sponsored coverage that incorporates Medicare group drug coverage and are counted in the PDP and MA-PD totals above.
- **Federal retiree coverage:** 3.5 million
  - **TRICARE:** There are 1.9 million beneficiaries with TRICARE retiree coverage.
  - **FEHB:** There are 1.6 million beneficiaries with FEHB retiree coverage. This figure includes spouses with Medicare who are covered under a FEHB family policy by retirees who also have Medicare coverage.
- **Alternative sources of "creditable" prescription drug coverage:** 5.8 million
  - **Veterans Affairs (VA):** There are an estimated 3.2 million beneficiaries with creditable drug coverage through the VA.

- **Indian Health Service (IHS):** There are an estimated 0.1 million beneficiaries with creditable drug coverage through the IHS.
- **Active Workers with Medicare Secondary Payer:** There are an estimated 2.0 million beneficiaries who are active workers with creditable drug coverage through an employer group health plan.
- **Other Retiree Coverage:** An estimated 0.5 million retirees are continuing in coverage from a former employer that is not coordinated with Medicare drug coverage but is still creditable.

We estimate that 3 million of those without drug coverage may not have applied for the low-income subsidy and could be able to enroll in a plan after the May 15 deadline. Many more are enrolling in plans as a result of our extensive outreach efforts in this last week to enroll people with Medicare in a plan that best meets their needs. In addition, Medicare is making extra efforts to enroll minority populations and beneficiaries who are eligible for the low income subsidy, with the assistance of a broad range of community and advocacy groups. The enrollment data and press release are each available online at:

[http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PrescriptionDrugCovGenIn/02\\_enrollmentdata.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PrescriptionDrugCovGenIn/02_enrollmentdata.asp)

<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2006pres/20060510.html>

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